

VZCZCXRO3067
OO RUEHDA
DE RUEHAK #2579/01 2911400
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 181400Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4061
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC//PA
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 8435
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3432
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 2385
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 6204
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 6008
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2601
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU
RHMFIUU/USDOCO 6ATAF IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39OS INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 522 INCIRLIK AB TU
RUEUITH/AFLO ANKARA TU

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 002579

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2007

In Today's Papers

Turkish Parliament Approves Iraq Incursion Motion

All papers report the Turkish Parliament has overwhelmingly approved a motion allowing troops to cross into northern Iraq to hunt down the PKK terrorists based there. The resolution covering a one-year period was approved in an open session Wednesday by a vote of 507 to 119.

Visiting Iraqi vice president, Tariq al-Hashimi, is quoted in papers as saying that Iraq must be given a chance to stop the PKK terrorists before Turkey takes any step. Papers report President Bush as saying yesterday such an action "would not be in Turkish interests." "There is a better way to deal with the issue than having the Turks send massive additional troops into Iraq." Prime Minister Erdogan responded by saying that the important issue was "not what others say, but the decision of the Turkish Parliament." The head of the main opposition CHP, Deniz Baykal, voiced hope that the US will now see that Turkey is serious, stressing he hopes there will be no need for Turkish intervention. The Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki called Erdogan, asking him to give Baghdad and the Kurdish authorities in the area a new chance to eliminate the PKK terrorists. Maliki delegated a security mission to Turkey, according to papers. The Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, in Paris on a visit, said "We hope that the wisdom of Prime Minister Erdogan will prevent any military action. The Iraqi government and the Kurdistan government are both willing to do whatever it takes to reach an agreement among the Iraqi, Turkish, and US officials to end this crisis." Papers note that Turkey's western allies including the EU and US all urged Ankara to refrain from unilateral military action.

Editorial Commentary on Turkish Iraq Incursion

Fehmi Koru writes in the Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak: "The PKK's activities have no similarity to the ones they carried out in the past. They take action mainly against the military and have planned to kill as many soldiers as they can to hurt more people across Turkey. Also, with their attacks, they are continuously provoking

the Turkish military. We can feel the fine calculations in every action the PKK takes. If we are aware of the well-planned, conscious terrorist act, then, our counter actions should be well planned too. PKK terrorism, today, aims to force Turkey to take certain actions in the international arena. Terrorism can be beaten by isolating the terrorists. However, we are after the plans to spread the front to a wider area. In order to deal with a small number of terrorists in northern Iraq, we should not launch a cross-border operation that would make all of Iraq against us. The right act here is to isolate the PKK and then develop new tactics to eliminate it. While doing this Turkey should adopt a stance that would not isolate itself in the region and in the world. Turkey should take lessons from the problems the US faces in Iraq. Otherwise, a wrong move that deals only with PKK terrorism, could turn Turkey into a free-zone for terrorism."

Ismail Kucukkaya writes in the tabloid Aksam: "Even though the motion for a cross-border operation has been approved in the parliament, I still hope that we won't be forced to use it. Now it is time to think and act calmly. We should start by diagnosing the problem correctly. Turkey's biggest problem has been not diagnosing problems correctly. Sudden decisions, emotional reactions and measures based on conjuncture, do not help us to take the correct decision and find lasting solutions. Terrorism is a security problem as well as a foreign policy issue. The PKK issue is affecting our foreign policy and international relations and cornering us. That is why I consider the motion, which is a radical decision and a step with many risks, as an opportunity to free our policies and change the paradigm. At this point, we need a major and deep strategy to explain terrorism in the international arena calmly and clearly. We should exhibit a new approach which will allow us to take effective steps in our foreign policy. If Turkey

ANKARA 00002579 002 OF 003

manages to settle in a correct position in the global system, and determines its international relations and foreign policy accordingly, then, PKK terrorism will lose its purpose."

Syria's Bashar Supports Turkish Incursion into Iraq

All papers report Syrian Head of State Bashar al-Assad, on a four-day visit to Turkey starting Tuesday, met with his Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gul in an official ceremony at Cankaya Palace Wednesday. Assad stated Syria's support to Turkey's right to self-defense. "President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan assured me Turkey had no ulterior motives in attacking northern Iraq," Bashar told the press after meeting Gul. Assad claimed the US-led coalition forces were mainly responsible for tackling the PKK in the region. Bashar will meet Turkish business representatives in Istanbul on Thursday and leave Turkey on Friday.

Turkish Incursion Fears Hurt Trade in Southeast Turkey

Mainstream Sabah says about 40,000 Turkish troops backed by Cobra and Sikorsky helicopters continue security operations in the southeastern provinces of Sirnak, Hakkari and Siirt. Several papers report people and businessmen fear the impact of the operations, saying oil trade with northern Iraq was halted. Trade with northern Iraq diminished to USD 2.085 billion in 2006 from USD 8 billion in 2005, says Sabah. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports businessmen in the mainly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir say Turkish attacks will bring trade activities in the region to a standstill, and take business in the region "back to the 1990s."

Paper: Iraq May Not Join Istanbul Summit

Without citing sources, leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet claims Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari will not participate in the expanded Iraq's neighbors' summit talks to be held in Istanbul soon unless Vice President Tarik al-Hashimi convinces Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani to take urgent measures against the PKK and cut support for the terrorist organization. Secretary Rice might also cancel her participation in Istanbul talks in the face of such a development, Cumhuriyet reports, saying the diplomatic initiative launched by Turkey could be deadlocked.

Armenian Resolution in US Congress Waning

All papers report 11 US lawmakers have withdrawn support from the Armenian genocide resolution in Congress, which was approved last

week by House Foreign Affairs Committee. Papers say after receiving a call from President Bush, Speaker Pelosi said it was not certain that the resolution would come to the floor for a vote. Mainstream Vatan says the Armenian lobby has been stunned by the developments.

Turkish General Staff chief General Yasar Buyukanit, in Rome on an official visit, told the press that if the resolution should be adopted in the Congress, the Turkey-US military ties will "never be the same." "But I hope it will not pass, and our ties with the US will be better," Buyukanit said. Buyukanit, in response to a question, said he was "surprised" to see Tom Lantos vote in favor of the bill. Papers also report President Bush as saying "Congress has more important work to do than antagonizing a democratic ally in the Muslim world, especially one that is providing vital support for our military every day."

TV Highlights
NTV

Domestic News

- High Election Board (YSK) said the referendum on the constitutional reforms will be put to vote on October 21. The reforms foresee general elections to be held once in every four years instead of five, the president to be elected by popular vote, the presidential term to be lowered from the current seven years to five with a second term in office, and a quorum of one-third (184)

ANKARA 00002579 003 OF 003

of the total number of MPs (550) to be required to open a parliamentary debate.

- Brent Scowcroft, Chairman of the American-Turkish Council (ATC), met yesterday
Prime Minister Erdogan. The two discussed Turkey-US ties.

- Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir faces two lawsuits for describing the PKK as an "armed Kurdish opposition movement" and making PKK propaganda in London in December last year. The prosecutor in Diyarbakir asks for a total 12.5-year prison sentence for Baydemir.

International News

- NATO secretary general Scheffer called President Gul to urge restraint over a possible Turkish military operation into Iraq.

- Standard & Poor's said the parliamentary approval of incursions into Iraq will have no immediate impact on the ratings on Turkey.

- IMF's "World Economic Outlook" report contains only one sentence about Turkey: In 2007 Turkish growth is expected to be 5 percent, and inflation 8.2 percent.

WILSON